

FOR RELEASE: July 24, 2001

Paul Introduces Legislation to Prohibit Medical ID Numbers

Washington, DC: Congressman Ron Paul yesterday introduced legislation that prevents the federal government from creating national medical ID numbers for Americans. The "Patient Privacy Act," which repeals portions of a 1996 federal law, specifically forbids any government agency from creating a "standard unique health care identifier," while also prohibiting the use of federal funds for the development of a national health information database. "As a physician, my first priority is patient privacy," Paul stated. "The federal government has no business tracking your medical history. A federal medical ID would give bureaucrats access to the intimate details of your doctor and hospital visits. Patients must place absolute trust in their doctors, so that effective treatment can be given. Yet patients will be reluctant to discuss sensitive problems such as AIDS, alcoholism, and mental illness if they know such information will be turned over to the federal government." The national health ID proposal was widely criticized when first touted by the Clintons, and Congress voted to suspend funding for the program in one-year increments. Paul's bill, however, would eliminate the program altogether. "The American people don't want a national medical ID number," Paul continued. "We've seen what the federal government did to our privacy with the supposedly confidential Social Security number. If Congress allows the creation of a federal medical ID, government agencies, HMOs, insurance companies, and criminals undoubtedly will use the number in unscrupulous ways. Congress needs to act now to block this latest threat to medical privacy." Paul has been instrumental in generating opposition to the medical ID in Congress, and his bill already enjoys bipartisan support. "Federal health care bureaucrats won't give up easily," Paul concluded. "One year delays of this program are not enough. We need to kill the national medical ID number permanently."

